

The After-Fate of the Kingdom
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tine-pie. The last great Comnenus was gone with Manuel (1180); the pretenders who asserted their right to the throne gave William the chance to act Guiscard over again, and a pseudo-Alexis Comnenus was received as the true Basileus in Palermo. The flotilla which the King of Sicily despatched against the Emperor Andronicus in June, 1185,—a hundred years after Guiscard's death on Greek soil,—might be deemed sufficient to overthrow the ancient Empire. But after an army calculated at eighty thousand men and a fleet of two to three hundred ships had taken Thessalonica, second city of the Empire, and then converged on Constantinople, the armies of the new Basileus Isaac Angelus decisively overthrew the Sicilians on the Strymon (7th September, 1185).

Twice foiled, William saw in the Crusade which followed on Saladin's capture of Jerusalem and subjection of almost all Syria and Palestine (1185-1187) an opportunity in which the kingdom of Sicily might lead Europe in arms. Here his policy differs from that of Roger II.; William, had he lived, would have sent his admirals and commanders to face Saladin on the very soil of Palestine

and led or preceded the kings of the
West in a
great crusade. Margaritus, an
admiral worthy
of the best days of the Sicilian navy,
with a flotilla
of sixty ships, cleared the seas
between Sicily
and the Holy Land, checked Saladin
at Tripoli
in 1188, and made his name resound
in all the